



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: February 5, 2025  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads  
Route To: Principals, School Safety Specialists, School Administration, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, School Faculty  
From: Ambrose F. Duckett, III, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Field Support and Services

## **School Safety Speaker Series – Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Best Practices: A Defensible Process, Special Education Considerations, and Emerging Challenges**

The New Jersey Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning (OSPEP), in partnership with the Jersey City/Newark Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), is hosting Dr. Melissa Reeves, a nationally certified school psychologist, licensed special education teacher, licensed clinical mental health counselor, and former district coordinator of social/emotional/behavioral services on February 28, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Middlesex County Fire Academy, 1001 Fire Academy Dr. Sayreville, NJ 08872.

Dr. Reeves will present current best practices in behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) in schools, with a focus on creating a defensible process and addressing special education considerations. This session will also address emerging challenges, such as AI-created threats and the role of social media, offering practical case examples and strategies for addressing these evolving risks. Attendees will gain insights into multidisciplinary team formation, systemic barriers to information sharing, documentation, and follow-up planning. Dr. Reeves will also speak to IDEA, 504, ADA Title II, and Title IX considerations that must be addressed within the threat assessment process to ensure districts are complying with federal law will also be presented. The session will also highlight the importance of equity, bias reduction, and compliance with federal special education laws.

Workshop participants will:

- Understand critical components of a legally defensible BTAM process.
- Explore strategies to increase equity while reducing bias and disproportionality in BTAM practices.
- Differentiate between threat assessment and suicide risk assessment.
- Discuss considerations for conducting threat assessments involving students with disabilities or suspected disabilities.
- Examine the intersection of IDEA, Section 504, and ADA Title II "Direct Threat Standard" with BTAM processes.
- Discuss the impact of AI-generated threats and social media threats on threat assessment practices.
- Receive best practices for parental notification, information sharing, disciplinary actions, and programming changes/placement decisions.

There is no fee to attend this presentation, however, space is limited, and registration is required. Please register [here](#).

School Safety Specialists who have not yet completed this training will receive appropriate hours toward certification renewal. If you have any questions or concerns, please email OSPEP at [school.security@doe.nj.gov](mailto:school.security@doe.nj.gov).

c: Members, State Board of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
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